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Rethinking What It Means to be a Scholar*

The old teaching versus research debate has drawn us into a hopeless quagmire. We have heard all the arguments and find them tiring—minds are closed, not opened. The language and polarities used to frame the present discussion of the relationship of teaching and research need to be set aside. The time is ripe for a basic reassessment. To move beyond the current impasse we need to be willing to take a fresh approach and think more creatively about what it means to be a scholar in the contemporary context.

The present conception of scholarship is much too narrow. During the expansionist period in American higher education, what Jenks and Riesman called "The academic revolution" (ca. 1957-1974), scholarship was equated with research on the cutting edge of a discipline (1968). Further, it took on significance only when it was publishable in a refereed journal—one narrow facet of the scholarly enterprise, one way of knowing.

To meet the growing demands of a knowledge-based society and to attract the best of a new generation into the academic profession, we need an enlarged view of scholarship: one congruent with the rich diversity that is this hallmark of American higher education; one that is more appropriate, more authentic, and more adaptive for both our institutions and the day-to-day working lives of faculty.

Scholarship: An Enlarged View

A broader conception of scholarship would have at least four elements, all of them legitimate and, taken in the aggregate, tending to fulfill the scholarly commitments of the college and university to society. According to the conventional view only one way of knowing is fully recognized and honored. Scholarship is narrowly defined as the advancement of knowledge—the discovery and creation of new knowledge in a disciplinary specialization. This is a limited view. We contend that knowledge is utilized in a variety of ways and that these other forms of scholarship—these other ways of knowing—are as legitimate, significant, and needed as the dominant mode. Our broader conception of scholarship would obviously include the advancement of knowledge but extend to also incorporate the integration of knowledge, the application of knowledge, and the kind of scholarship most directly related to teaching, the representation of knowledge.

If we build on the recent inquiry into the structure of knowledge and alternative approaches to learning, a different configuration, a more constructive way of framing the discussion emerges. Borrowing on the polarities established by David Kolb (1984) and others, the forms of scholarship we have identified can be set within a framework representing the different approaches to knowing.

The advancement of knowledge. The first element in this broader conception of scholarship—still a key element—is the advancement of knowledge. On this we all agree. In 1919, Max Weber, in his famous address on "Science as a Vocation," spoke eloquently about the role of specialization in the modern world, and talked of the sense of ecstasy that could come only to one on the cutting edge of a specialization. The awareness of an enduring achievement is, in his words, "a really definitive and good accomplishment." Scholarship must have, as one anchor point, the discovery of knowledge—original research.

The integration of knowledge. The extension of the frontiers of knowledge is, however, not enough. The second element in scholarship is the integration of knowledge, an undertaking as critical to the understanding of our world as the discovery of knowledge that is new. In fact, the extension

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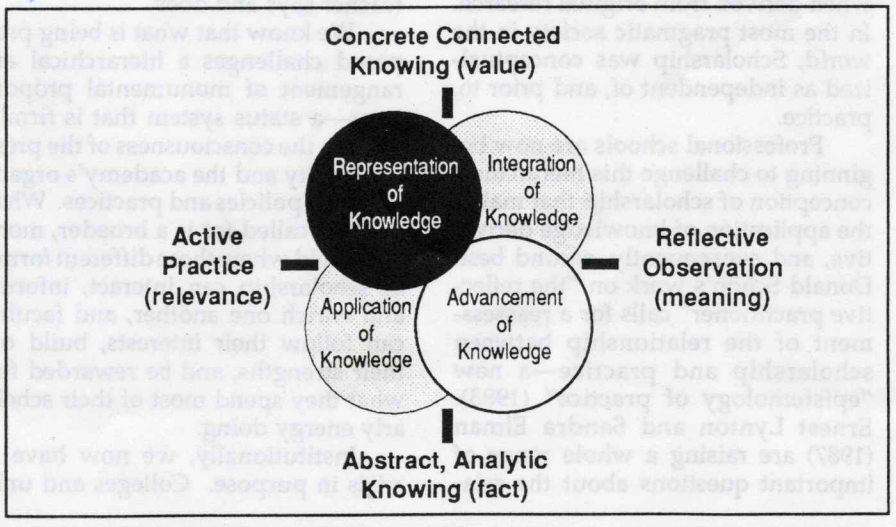

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of specialization itself requires new forms of integration. Without the continual effort at reintegration, we have fragmentation.

The integration of knowledge requires a divergent approach to knowing—a different kind of scholarship—one that reaches across disciplinary boundaries and pulls disparate views and information together in creative ways. Scholars are needed with a capacity to synthesize, to look for new relationships between the parts and the whole, to relate the past and future to the present, and to fetter out patterns of meaning that cannot be seen through traditional disciplinary lenses.

The application of knowledge. The third form of scholarship is the most distinctively American. The great land-grant institutions were established during the nineteenth century precisely for the purpose of applying knowledge to the enormous agricultural and technical problems confronting society. In the academic profession today, however, there is a disturbing gap between what is valued as scholarship and the pragmatic needs of the larger world.

This ironic development in American higher education has multiple roots, but one important strand can be traced back to the emergence of professional education and, specifically, to the impact of the Flexner report on medical education. The major effect of the Flexner report was to move medical education into the research university and greatly increase its scientific component. The other professions followed medicine's lead. Practical competence became professional when grounded in systematic, preferably scientific knowledge. The application of knowledge took on value—rigor and prestige—when derived from original research. In the most pragmatic society in the world, Scholarship was conceptualized as independent of, and prior to, practice.

Professional schools are now beginning to challenge this hierarchical conception of scholarship that makes the application of knowledge derivative, and consequently, second best. Donald Schön's work on "the reflective practitioner" calls for a reassessment of the relationship between scholarship and practice—a new "epistemology of practice" (1983). Ernest Lynton and Sandra Elman (1987) are raising a whole range of important questions about the relationship between scholarship and professional service. Should not the application of knowledge to the problems of society be acknowledged as a scholarly endeavor of the first order?

Scholarship and teaching. This brings us to the fourth dimension: scholarship for teaching. This is the most difficult form of scholarship to discuss because we do not have the appropriate language. In the working lives of individual faculty, scholarship and teaching are often seen as antithetical—competing for one's time and attention. This is a reflection of the way in which we conceptualize both tasks. We want to challenge this understanding and argue that quality teaching requires substantive scholarship that builds on, but is distinct from original research, and that this scholarly effort needs to be honored and rewarded.

This fourth dimension of scholarship has an integrity of its own, but is deeply embedded in the other three forms—the advancement, integration, and application of knowledge. In addition, the scholarship for teaching has three distinct elements: first, the *synoptic capacity*, the ability to draw the strands of a field together in a way that provides both coherence and meaning, to place what is known in context and open the way for connection to be made between the knower and the known; second, what Lee Shulman (1987) calls *"pedagogical content knowledge,"* the capacity to represent a subject in ways that transcend the split between intellectual substance and teaching process, usually having to do with the metaphors, analogies, and experiments used; and third, *what we know about learning*, scholarly inquiry into how students "make meaning"—to use William Perry's phrase—out of what the teacher says and does.

We know that what is being proposed challenges a hierarchical arrangement of monumental proportions—a status system that is firmly fixed in the consciousness of the present faculty and the academy's organizational policies and practices. What is being called for is a broader, more open field where these different forms of scholarship can interact, inform, and enrich one another, and faculty can follow their interests, build on their strengths, and be rewarded for what they spend most of their scholarly energy doing.

Institutionally, we now have a crisis in purpose. Colleges and universities are trying to be what they are not, and they are falling short of what they could be. An enlarged conception of scholarship would bring greater congruence between institutional mission and faculty work.

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